

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01 L-03

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SAJ-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 STR-08 CIEP-02 PA-04 PRS-01

USIA-15 DRC-01 /145 W

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7570

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

SECDEF

DOD/ASD/ISA

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

CSAF

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 4681

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS NO BEXP

SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT: NORWAY

REFS: (A) BRUSSELS 7280 (B) BRUSSELS 7369

SUMMARY. NORWAY HAS COMPLETED A STUDY OF REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS
FOR NORWEGIAN AIRFORCE F-104'S AND F-5'S. WITH DEFENSE MINISTER
FOSTERVOLL CHAIRMAN OF EUROGROUP, WE ARE AT CRUCIAL POINT FOR
ENCOURAGING ALREADY STRONG NORWEGIAN INTEREST IN COBRA OR SIMILAR
SYSTEM; AN INDICATION THAT US IS CONTEMPLATING PURCHASE OF THIS
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TYPE AIRCRAFT WOULD BE OF SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE HERE. NORWEGIAN
ENTHUSIASM COULD ALSO INFLUENCE OTHER SMALLER NATO MEMBERS IN

DIRECTION OF US RATHER THAN EUROPEAN PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT
AIRCRAFT. END SUMMARY

1. THE NORWEGIAN DEFENSE RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT HAS COMPLETED A STUDY DEFINING THE AIRCRAFT NORWAY WOULD NEED TO REPLACE THE F-104 AND F-5 AIRCRAFT WITHIN ITS AIR FORCE IN THE LAST HALF OF THE 70'S. ALTHOUGH THE STUDY HAS NOT YET BEEN PRESENTED FOR OFFICIAL APPROVAL, THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS WILL HAVE THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON THE NORWEGIAN DECISION: AIRCRAFT CAPABILITY; GROWTH POTENTIAL; A SUFFICIENTLY LARGE INDUSTRIAL BASE ON THE PART OF THE PRODUCING COUNTRY TO ASSURE BOTH LOGISTIC SUPPORT AND A SOURCE FOR REPLACEMENT OF OPERATIONAL LOSSES; AND COST. THE CAPABILITY THEY DESIRE IS PRIMARILY FOR AIR SUPERIORITY/AIR DEFENSE AND SECONDARILY FOR INTERDICTION/CLOSE AIR SUPPORT. IN THE LATTER CAPABILITY, THEY HAVE A REQUIREMENT FOR CARRIAGE OF CONVENTIONAL ORDNANCE WITH THE FULL RANGE OF ELECTRO-OPTICAL AND LASER GUIDED BOMBS AND MISSILES.

2. THE DECISION TO BUY A EUROPEAN PRODUCT WOULD PROBABLY BE TAKEN RELUCTANTLY IN VIEW OF THE RISK OF INADEQUATE ASSURANCE OF LOGISTIC SUPPORT AND REPLACEMENT FOR ATTRITION. COST OR A DECISION TO "BUY EUROPEAN" BY OTHER SMALLER NATO COUNTRIES WHO FACE A SIMILAR WAR "SCENARIO" COULD, HOWEVER, INFLUENCE NORWAY TO BUY EITHER A FRENCH OR SWEDISH PRODUCT.

3. THE NORWEGIANS HAVE RECEIVED BRIEFINGS ON THE LOCKHEED LANCER AND THE NORTHROP COBRA AND HAVE EXPRESSED AN INFORMAL BUT KEEN INTEREST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE USAF LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER. A US DECISION TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT PURCHASE OF THE LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER FOR EITHER TACTICAL AIR COMMAND (TAC) OR TAC-GAINED FORCES, WOULD BE A PERSUASIVE FACTOR IN THE EYES OF THE NORWEGIANS. THE EXAMPLE OF UNITED STATES (AND RUSSIAN) REPLACEMENT OF AIRCRAFT AND PARTS RE-SUPPLY DURING THE RECENT MIDDLE-EAST CONFLICT HAS TENDED TO ENHANCE IMPORTANCE OF PROBLEM-FREE LOGISTIC SUPPORT AND REINFORCE NORWEGIAN VIEWS ON THIS SCORE. A FURTHER ADVANTAGE FOR THE NORWEGIANS, SHOULD THE US PURCHASE THIS TYPE AIRCRAFT FOR ITSELF, IS THE EFFECT OF REDUCING DEVELOPMENT COSTS AND THE COST OF SUBSEQUENT ENGINEERING MODIFICATIONS, AS WELL AS PROVIDING A BROADER DATA BASE FOR OPERATIONS AND SAFETY. THE NORWEGIAN
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ACQUISITION OF THE F-5, WHICH WAS IN THE UNITED STATES INVENTORY ONLY IN TOKEN NUMBERS, HAS MADE THEM WARY AND SOMEWHAT ANXIOUS TO AVOID REPEATING THAT EXPERIENCE.

4. NORWAY, THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM AND DENMARK ALL FACE DECISIONS ON REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT AND MANY OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED ARE COMMON TO THE FOUR COUNTRIES. THEREFORE, A STRONG US INITIATIVE AT THIS TIME, PARTICULARLY IF THE US CAN DECLARE AN INTENTION TO ADD THE SAME AIRCRAFT TO THE USAF INVENTORY, COULD DETERMINE THE OUTCOME FOR NORWAY AND MIGHT INFLUENCE THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM AND

DENMARK AS WELL. NORWEGIAN DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL NOW CHAIRS
THE EUROGROUP, AN APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR EXCHANGING VIEWS ON THIS
SUBJECT AND ONE WHERE NORWEGIAN ENTHUSIASM FOR PURCHASE OF US
AIRCRAFT COULD BE EXPLOITED TO OUR ADVANTAGE. BYRNE

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